

**WORKING
TOGETHER
TOWARD
A COMMON GOAL –
CLEANING UP
HANFORD**

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**THE
TRI-PARTY
AGREEMENT**



**WASHINGTON STATE
DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY**

The Tri-Party Agreement

The Tri-Party Agreement (also known as the Hanford Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order) is a legally binding document entered into by the United States Department of Energy, the Washington State Department of Ecology, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency, on May 15, 1989. This document is a comprehensive **cleanup** and **compliance** contract that was declared a “Landmark Agreement” by Governor Booth Gardner. The “compliance” aspect means achieving compliance with the *Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act* (CERCLA) remedial action provisions, and with the *Resource Conservation and Recovery Act* (RCRA) treatment, storage, and disposal (TSD) unit regulations and corrective action provisions.

The Tri-Party Agreement consists of three distinctive components:

1. **Legal Agreement** . . . describes the roles, responsibilities, and authority of the three agencies for the cleanup, compliance and permitting processes; and defines dispute resolution
2. **Action Plan** . . . describes how to implement the cleanup and permitting efforts, including meeting the milestones for initiating and completing specific work and procedures
3. **Community Relations Plan** . . . describes how the public will be informed and involved throughout the cleanup process

And, more specifically, this document . . .

1. Defines and prioritizes CERCLA and RCRA cleanup commitments
2. Establishes responsibilities
3. Provides a basis for budgeting
4. Reflects an aggressive approach for achieving full regulatory compliance and remediation through enforceable milestones

In 1999, the Tri-Party Agreement celebrated its tenth anniversary and reflecting back across that decade, it appears that it has been an excellent tool for progress in cleaning up Hanford. The Tri-Party Agreement has not remained stagnant . . . it has undergone many changes. In its evolution, it established the single-regulator approach on key projects, enabling contractors to better focus on the requirements for cleanup and compliance, while working with *one* primary regulatory agency.

The Tri-Party Agreement has survived the test of time; continued success means that all the parties need to focus on long-term environmental results, environmental compliance . . . and, consistently look at ways to further cleanup of the Hanford Site.